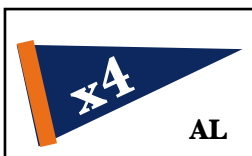
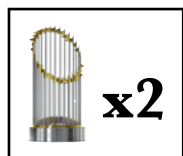




HOUSTON ASTROS

American League West



4921
FRANCHISE WINS

90-72
2023 SEASON

1st
DIVISION

#30
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Houston, TX - Minute Maid Park (41,168)
Manager: Joe Espada (0-0, 1st Season)

2023: Lost in ALCS

'Stros Hungry For More

Since 2017, the Astros have consistently been top contenders in the American League and 2023 was no exception. Despite losing Yuli Gurriel and Justin Verlander to free agency before the season, Houston upgraded at first base with the signing of Jose Abreu and eventually re-acquired Verlander at the trade deadline, making them a formidable contender yet again. Houston defeated the Twins in four games in the ALDS before falling to the Texas Rangers in a seven-game ALCS, ending their hopes of a second-straight World Series title. Manager Dusty Baker retired after the season and the team promoted bench coach Joe Espada to fill the position.

Batting

The Astros have had one of the better lineups in the game for years and that should continue in 2024. **Jose Altuve** missed nearly half the season with two separate injuries, but when he was on the field he produced at a high level again, batting .311 with 17 home runs in 90 games. **Alex Bregman** has never quite reached the heights of his 41-home run 2019 season, but he remains a solid hitter with power and good defense at third base. **Yordan Alvarez** was also limited due to injuries, but he put up huge numbers in the 114 games that he played and he remains one of the most feared hitters in baseball. **Kyle Tucker** has a case as the most underrated player in baseball and has come very close to posting 30 home runs and 30 stolen bases in each of the last two seasons while providing terrific defense in right field. The rest of the Houston outfield will likely be made up of **Chas McCormick** and **Mauricio Dubon**, who are both coming off the best offensive seasons of their respective careers.

Jose Abreu disappointed a bit in his first season with Houston, but he played better down the stretch, including hitting three home runs in the ALDS to power the Astros to the next round of the playoffs. At the catcher position, longtime veteran Martin Maldonado has moved on to Chicago and it's now **Yainer Diaz's** time to shine. While his defense is a downgrade from Maldonado, his offense is a big upgrade. Yainer showed huge power with 23 home runs in just 104 games during 2023. Big things were expected of **Jeremy Peña** after he won both the ALCS and World Series MVPs in 2022, but he had a bit of a disappointing season with a big drop in power. He remains a young player with tons of potential and he's one of the better defenders in the league at shortstop.

Pitching

The biggest reason Houston won the World Series in 2022 was their pitching; the Astros allowed just three runs in the final three games of the 2022 Fall Classic. However, their pitching proved to be their downfall in 2023 and they allowed a combined 20 runs in the final two games of the ALCS vs. Texas. That said, the team returns much of the same rotation and there is plenty of talent there. **Justin Verlander** will turn 41 before the start of the 2024 season, but he still knows how to get batters out and hasn't shown any signs of his age and he pitched to a 3.22 ERA in 2023. **Framber Valdez** tossed a no-hitter in 2023 and remains a very effective #2 pitcher who allows lots of soft contact and has pitched nearly 200 innings in each of the last two years. **Cristian Javier** became a household name with his World Series no-hitter in 2022, but he took a big step back last season with his ERA rising from 2.54 to 4.56. Javier is still young with elite stuff, however, and will have every opportunity to bounce back. One big breakout candidate is **Hunter Brown**, a Detroit native who grew up idolizing Verlander while watching him pitch for the Tigers. Although he struggled last season, he has huge potential. **José Urquidy** had a rough 2023 season between injuries and poor performance, but he has proved that he can be a capable starter in the past. **J.P France** pitched effectively as a starter last year and can serve as a long reliever out of the bullpen as well.

Houston's big free agent splash this year was bringing in former Brewers and Padres closer **Josh Hader**, who has a strong case as the best reliever in the game. Hader pitched to a 1.28 ERA during 2023 while striking out 85 batters in 56 innings. **Ryan Pressly**, who has been the club's closer, will remain with the team as the setup man. It speaks to the depth of the Astros' bullpen that their best reliever last year, **Bryan Abreu** (100 Ks in 72 innings, 1.75 ERA) may be the man who pitches the 7th inning when Houston has a lead.

The Bottom Line

The Astros have made seven-straight appearances in the ALCS thanks to a perennially-balanced team with players that are elite at hitting, pitching, and defense. It's hard to bet against them until they give reason to do otherwise. The team has lost George Springer, Gerrit Cole, and Carlos Correa to free agency over the years but they haven't missed a beat. With Bregman and Pressly becoming free agents after the season, other core players beginning to get older, and the farm system a bit bare due to various trades to better the team for another playoff run, time could be running out on this window of contention. At least for this year, Houston can be considered strong World Series contenders again.

2024 Projection: 95-67, 1st in AL West

Kyle Tucker



Photo via Sports Illustrated



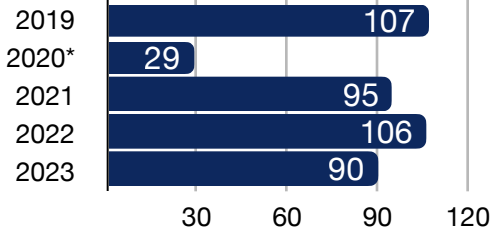
2023 MLB Ranks
RPG - 5.10 (5th)
HITS - 1441 (3rd)
HR - 222 (7th)
ERA - 3.94 (8th)
SO - 1460 (7th)
FD% - .986% (12th)

Framber Valdez



Photo via Sports Illustrated

ASTROS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



7 < Number to Know

Remarkably, Houston has made seven straight appearances in the ALCS and they've gone on to the World Series four of those seven times. Can they make it eight straight in 2024?

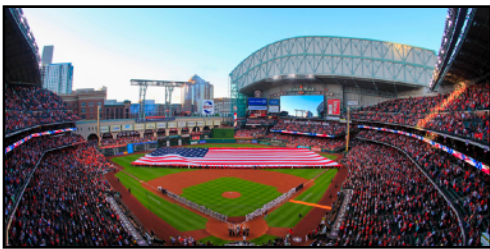


Photo via MLB

PROSPECT TO WATCH Jacob Melton - OF

A second round pick by Houston in 2022 and a former PAC-12 player of the year at Oregon State, Jacob Melton has as much potential as anyone in the Astros' farm system. He is a threat with both power and speed, hitting 23 home runs while stealing 46 bases in the minor leagues in 2023 and he's a capable defender in center or right field. A left-handed batter, the biggest question in his development to this point is whether he will be able to hit left-handed pitching consistently, as that has been a struggle in the minors thus far. He will likely begin the 2024 season at Double-A and, while we probably won't see him in the big leagues this year, if he continues to demonstrate power and speed he could be on the Opening Day roster in 2025.



Photo via The Crawfish Boxes

Projected Lineup			'23 AVG
27	Jose Altuve	2B	.311
2	Alex Bregman	3B	.262
44	Yordan Alvarez	DH	.293
30	Kyle Tucker	RF	.284
79	José Abreu	1B	.237
21	Yainer Diaz	C	.282
20	Chas McCormick	LF	.273
3	Jeremy Peña	SS	.263
14	Mauricio Dubon	CF	.278

Projected Rotation			'23 ERA
35	Justin Verlander	SP	3.22
59	Framber Valdez	SP	3.45
53	Cristian Javier	SP	4.56
58	Hunter Brown	SP	5.09
65	José Urquidy	SP	5.29
71	Josh Hader	CL	1.28

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Kyle Tucker - RF



2023 Statistics

GP AVG OPS HR RBI
157 .284 .886 29 112

Even with all of the great hitters in the Astros lineup, no one drove in more runs or stole more bases for Houston in 2023 than Kyle Tucker. Over the past two seasons, he has 59 home runs and 55 stolen bases. In every full season he has played in his career, he has had an OPS of .800 or better. And, as good as he's been, he's just entering his prime at age 27. Even the slightest improvement will make him a legitimate MVP contender after he finished 5th in the voting in 2023.

2024 Schedule

March/April 2024												
										NYN 28 4:10	NYN 29 8:10	NYN 30 7:15
NYN 31 2:10	TOR 1 8:10	TOR 2 8:10	TOR 3 8:10							TEX 5 8:05	TEX 6 7:05	
TEX 7 7:00	TEX 8 8:05	KC 9 7:40	KC 10 7:40	KC 11 7:40						TEX 12 8:10	TEX 13 4:05	
TEX 14 2:10	ATL 15 8:10	ATL 16 8:10	ATL 17 8:10							WSH 19 6:45	WSH 20 4:05	
WSH 21 1:35		CHC 23 7:40	CHC 24 7:40	CHC 25 2:20							COL 27 6:05	
COL 28 4:05		CLE 30 8:10										

May 2024														
										CLE 1 8:10	CLE 2 8:10	SEA 3 8:10	SEA 4 7:15	
SEA 5 2:10										NYN 7 7:05	NYN 8 7:05	NYN 9 5:05	DET 10 6:40	DET 11 6:10
DET 12 1:40	OAK 13 8:10	OAK 14 8:10	OAK 15 8:10	OAK 16 8:10						MIL 17 8:10	MIL 18 7:10			
MIL 19 2:10	LAA 20 8:10	LAA 21 8:10	LAA 22 2:10							OAK 24 9:40	OAK 25 4:07			
OAK 26 4:07	SEA 27 9:40	SEA 28 9:40	SEA 29 9:40	SEA 30 4:10						MIN 31 8:10				

June 2024													
													MIN 1 7:10
MIN 2 2:10	STL 3 8:10	STL 4 8:10	STL 5 8:10							LAA 7 9:38	LAA 8 10:07		
LAA 9 4:07	SF 10 9:45	SF 11 9:45	SF 12 3:45							DET 14 8:10	DET 15 7:10		
DET 16 2:10		CWS 18 8:10	CWS 19 8:10	CWS 20 2:10						BAL 21 8:10	BAL 22 7:10		
BAL 23 2:10		COL 25 8:10	COL 26 2:10							NYM 28 7:10	NYM 29 4:10		
NYM 30 1:40													

July 2024													
	TOR 3:07	TOR 7:07	TOR 7:07	TOR 1:07	MIN 8:10	MIN 2:10							
MIN 7 2:10		MIA 9 8:10	MIA 10 8:10	MIA 11 8:10						TEX 12 8:10	TEX 13 4:10		
TEX 14 2:10	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX									SEA 19 10:10	SEA 20 9:40		
SEA 21 4:10	OAK 22 9:40	OAK 23 9:40	OAK 24 3:37							LAD 26 8:10	LAD 27 7:10		
LAD 28 2:10	PIT 29 8:10	PIT 30 8:10	PIT 31 8:10										

August 2024													
										TB 2 8:10	TB 3 7:15		
TB 4 2:10	TEX 5 8:05	TEX 6 8:05	TEX 7 2:35							BOS 9 7:10	BOS 10 4:10		
BOS 11 1:35	TB 12 6:50	TB 13 6:50	TB 14 6:50							CWS 16 8:10	CWS 17 7:10		
CWS 18 2:10	BOS 19 8:10	BOS 20 8:10	BOS 21 2:10							BAL 22 7:15	BAL 23 7:05	BAL 24 4:05	
BAL 25 1:35	PHI 26 6:40	PHI 27 6:40	PHI 28 4:05							KC 29 8:10	KC 30 8:10	KC 31 7:10	

September 2024													
KC 1 2:10	CIN 2 4:10			CIN 4 6:40	CIN 5 1:10	ARI 6 8:10	ARI 7 4:10						
ARI 8 2:10				OAK 10 8:10	OAK 11 8:10	OAK 12 2:10	LAA 13 9:38	LAA 14 9:38					
LAA 15 4:07	SD 16 9:40	SD 17 9:40	SD 18 6:40	LAA 19 8:10	LAA 20 8:10	LAA 21 7:10							
LAA 22 2:10	SEA 23 8:10	SEA 24 8:10	SEA 25 2:10							CLE 27 7:10	CLE 28 6:10		
CLE 29 3:10													

HOME AWAY